

## **Advisory Council on New Americans Members**



**Eva Millona, Executive Director of MIRA** - Eva A. Millona is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), the state's largest organization representing the foreign born, and co-chair of the National Partnership for New Americans, the lead national organization focusing on immigrant integration. She joined MIRA in 1999 and served as Director of Policy and Advocacy and as Deputy Director before becoming Executive Director in 2008, and she is now one of New England's most highly quoted immigration experts. Prior to MIRA, Ms. Millona directed the refugee resettlement program in Central Massachusetts. In her native Albania, she practiced civil and criminal law, serving on Tirana's District Court from 1989 – 1992, when she was the nation's youngest district judge ever appointed. Ms. Millona is also the co-chair of the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees and Immigrants and serves on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She is the recipient of over a dozen major awards, including the prestigious 2009 USCIS Outstanding American by Choice Award, the 2010 Wainwright Bank Social Justice Award, and the 2011 and 2012 Powermeter Award, presented to the most influential people for Latinos in Massachusetts.

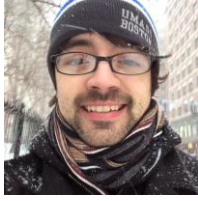


**Patricia Sobalvarro, Executive Director of Agencia ALPHA** - As director of the agency Alcanzando Logros Para Los Hispanos Ahora (Achieving Successes For Hispanics Today), ALPHA, Patricia Sobalvarro is responsible for carrying out the social service mission of her organization, which was founded in 2001 by two Christian immigrant women. ALPHA offers educational programs, referrals, translation, etc., as well as advocacy and political impact programs in defense of immigrant rights.



**Gladys Vega, Executive Director of Chelsea Collaborative** - Gladys Vega, Executive Director of the Chelsea Collaborative, joined the organization in 1990, two years after its inception as the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative. She took on increasing responsibility with each passing year, moving from receptionist to community organizer to Assistant Executive Director to becoming the Executive Director in 2006. Ms. Vega has worked as an organizer and an advocate to insure that the Latino community has a role in determining the ways its needs and concerns are addressed. Ms. Vega believes that empowerment of the individual leads to empowerment of the community and that social action is the vehicle an empowered community can use to achieve its goals. She has played leadership roles in organizing for immigrants' rights, welfare rights, tenants' rights, open space and the environment, multicultural and anti-racism programs and in numerous grassroots campaigns. She is not only a successful community organizer, but also one of Chelsea's most prominent and important community leaders, receiving citywide, statewide and national accolades for her leadership. Gladys Vega was born in Puerto Rico and came to Chelsea with her family at the age of nine. Since that time, Gladys has made a lifelong commitment to the community in which she was raised. Being a mother of two has deepened her commitment to building a better future.

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### **Conrado Santos, Lead Coordinator of Student Immigrant Movement -**

Student leader at UMass Boston. The Student Immigrant Movement (SIM) is a statewide immigrant youth-led organization based in Massachusetts. SIM identifies, recruit and develop leaders in local cities and towns who are invested in improving their communities through relational building, leadership development, electoral organizing and using both strategic and motivational campaigns that build movement.



### **Serge Bologov, Executive Director, Russian Community Association of Massachusetts and New American Center -**

Serge Bologov came to the U.S. from Kiev in 1992. In 1995 he joined the Russian Community Association of Massachusetts (RCAM) as its executive director. RCAM provides social services, ESL classes, employment, and other assistance to refugees and immigrants from the former Soviet Union; it has three offices in Massachusetts, located in Boston, Lynn, and Springfield. RCAM produces an electronic Russian community newsletter and a Russian language TV program called "Aspect." In 2004, Serge graduated from AJC's Leadership Training Program in Boston. Serge serves as a board member of several organizations including the Governor's Advisory Council on Refugees and Immigrants; Jewish Community Relations Council; Russian Jewish Community Foundation; Massachusetts Association of Russian Jews "Chaverim"; chair of the Joint Action Committee for Russian Jewish Community; and president of the League of Russian Voters and Coalition of New American Voters.



### **Paulo Pinto, Executive Director Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) -**

Paulo R. Pinto is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS). He has served the Portuguese-speaking community throughout his career of more than 25 years in the health and social service field. He began working at MAPS in January 1994, serving as Program Administrator for the agency's Disease Prevention and Education Program until late 1995, when he was promoted to the position of Deputy Executive Director. He served as the agency's second-in-command until April 3, 2000, when he became Acting Executive Director. He was appointed Executive Director by the MAPS Board of Directors on August 23, 2000. He is a member of the Governor's Council to Address Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Jane Doe Inc. Board of Directors, the Community Public Health Board and the Community Health Advisory Council of Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Harvard Catalyst Community Advisory Board. He also is a Notary Public for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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**Lydia Lowe, Co-Director Chinese Progressive Association** - For more than twenty-five years, Lydia Lowe has been part of building the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), a grassroots organization that works for full equality and empowerment of the Chinese community in Greater Boston and beyond. CPA works to raise the living and working standards of Chinese Americans and to involve ordinary community members in decision-making. During her tenure, Lydia has co-founded CPA's Workers Center for immigrant workers to organize for their rights, secured bilingual job training for displaced garment and electronic workers, helped tenants preserve more than a thousand units of affordable housing, and secured bilingual ballots for Chinese and Vietnamese speaking voters in the City of Boston. Lydia is a founding member of the Chinatown Master Plan Committee, the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative, and Right to the City Boston. She also currently supports an effort to build a Chinatown Community Land Trust.



**Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director of Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc.** - Executive Director, Helena DaSilva Hughes, was born in Madeira, Portugal, and immigrated to the United States at the age of 10 with her family. With a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Paralegal Studies from Newbury College, she is also a graduate of SouthCoast Leadership Academy in 2009. Ms. Hughes is committed to researching immigrant needs and developing programs to enhance the community potential. She has a working knowledge of community issues and legislative processes, serving as translator and interpreter. Ms. Hughes has been selected several times by the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, to inform and educate Congress about issues pertaining to the immigrant population. Ms. Hughes serves on the following Boards: Workforce Investment Board, the Governor's Advisory Council on Immigrants and Refugees, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy, the New Bedford Advisory Board of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), New Bedford Economic Development Council, Greater New Bedford Vocational High School Advisory Board, the Adult Learning Education Advisory, Portuguese American Citizenship Project Board of Directors, co-founder of Our Sister School, the Portuguese American Women's Association, Leadership SouthCoast, Inc., SouthCoast Hospital Community Benefits Advisory Board, the Offshore Wind Task Force and New Bedford Regeneration Committee.



**Ahmed Al Rubaye, Office Manager at Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC), in Worcester.** - Mr. Rubaye came to the United States as a refugee, and today coordinates services for newly arrived refugees in the Worcester area.



**Deirdre Griffin, New American Program Director, at Jewish Family Services of Western Mass.** - Mrs. Griffin manages refugee and immigrant services, including citizenship and unaccompanied refugee minors' programs.

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**Mohammed Najeeb, Program Manager, Services for New Americans, at Ascentria Care Alliance, in Holyoke** – Mr. Najeeb is originally from Iraq and came to the United States as a refugee. Prior to come to the U.S., he worked in refugee camps doing translation for refugee resettlement agencies and Iraq nationals. In Massachusetts, he manages services for newly arrived refugees in Western Mass.



**Damaris Frias-Batista, Executive Director & co-founder of Center For Assistance to Families (CAF), Centro de Apoyo Familiar (CAF)** - Damaris Frias-Bastista co-founded CAF. She is Executive director of CAF's Lawrence, MA office and oversees The Connectors, a national capacity building program for clergy serving Latino churches that prepares them to serve as bridge between their congregations and their communities. Mrs. Frias-Batista brings over 15 years of experience in the area of leadership development, management, and program development. She holds a BA in Psychology from University of Massachusetts at Boston and a MA in Mental Health with an specialty in children, youths and families from Southern New Hampshire University. Mrs. Frias Batista has served at her local church as youth, children, and family minister director.



**Gladys Ortiz, Domestic Violence Advocate, at REACH Beyond Domestic Violence, in Waltham** - Ms. Ortiz works with bilingual victims of domestic violence, bringing them to court appointments, providing translation, and access to service for victims.



**Joanna Dos Santos, Executive Director Cleghorn Neighborhood Center and the Cleghorn Youth Center** - A native of Uruguay, Joana Dos Santos has lived in the United States for 13 years. She attended Fitchburg High School, and later obtained an Associate's Degree in Business Administration at Mount Wachusett Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at Fitchburg State University. Currently, she is pursuing her Master's Degree in Applied Communication at Fitchburg State. Growing up, she became involved in many school organizations and clubs, ranging from volunteer groups to honor organizations. In 2009 she became fully involved in the fight for immigration reform, organizing immigrants and supporters in the Fitchburg/Leominster area, working in national campaigns as well as taking part in direct action and civil disobedience for the cause. Presently, Joana is the director of a local community center, the United Neighbors of Fitchburg (aka Cleghorn Neighborhood Center), working with youth and families affected by societal injustices, developing leaders, and, in partnership with community members and stakeholders, opening the doors of opportunities for disenfranchised communities. In addition, she serves on several volunteer boards including Mount Wachusett Community College board of trustees, the North Central MA Community Reinvestment Act Coalition, and the North Central MA Community Health Network Area 9.



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### **Dao Le, Secretary of Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts**

The Vietnamese Community of Massachusetts serves as the umbrella organization for 36 independent Vietnamese-American associations and organizations to promote collaboration among the various organizations and associations within the Vietnamese community of Massachusetts as a means to support and strengthen the community through unified efforts to protect the rights of Vietnamese Nationalist refugees by actively seeking solutions for the challenges and disadvantages faced at the local level.

### **Nadine Dorcena, Community Outreach Program Coordinator at Catholic Charities Haitian Multi Service Center**

The Haitian Multi-Service Center, the largest social service agency serving the Haitian population in Massachusetts, is a non-profit agency founded in 1978 to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing number of Haitian refugees coming to the area. It joined the Catholic Charities network in 1984. Its mission is to serve, in a linguistically and culturally sensitive manner, the health, education, day care and the immigration/settlement/food needs of the Haitian community, numbered at about 20-25,000, and to foster economic and social self-sufficiency. Today it serves 5,000 families annually.



**Deeqo Jibril, Executive Director of Somali Community & Cultural Association** - Deeqo Jibril, born in Somalia, is an entrepreneur, humanitarian, and ardent activist of social justice. Being a single mother of four children she exemplifies a new generation of African women and her strength of character sets a uniquely valuable model for women of African origin to emulate.

She has worked with the ABCD Housing Department as a Case Coordinator helping immigrants to understand and obtain affordable housing and has worked for the political campaigns of Jarrett Barriers, Governor Patrick and Senator Elizabeth Warren. As the founder and Executive Director of the Somali Community and Cultural Association (SCCA) in Boston, Jibril works to elevate the role of Boston's Somali community in the political, social, and economic life of the city. She is also the founder of African Mall in Roxbury, an oasis of African-owned small businesses working together in a spirit of cooperation. In recognition for this work, Jibril was chosen by the Massachusetts Commissioner on the Status of Women as one of their "Unsung Heroes." Jibril recently represented the Somali community at the White House summit on the prevention of radicalization and in a meeting with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). She works with the Boston Police Department to bridge the gap between Law Enforcement and the Somali and Muslim Community. She organized the first FBI Somali youth academy as well as the first law enforcement and community Iftar with two hundred people in attendance, including local leaders from the BPD and FBI.

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### **Khalid Sadozai, President of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester**

- Khalid Sadozai is the President of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester. Founded and established in 1978, the ISGW has been focal point of Islamic activities for the Muslim community. The Islamic Society of Greater Worcester (ISGW), an independent non-profit organization that is located in central Massachusetts in the city of Worcester. The ISGW is dedicated to satisfying spiritual, education and social needs of the Muslims including New Muslims.



**Suzanne Lee, Community Activist** - Suzanne Lee is a Chinatown resident former principal of the Josiah Quincy Elementary School in Chinatown. During her decade long tenure as the school's principal, the school was named one of the Best 100 Elementary Schools in Massachusetts. She founded and then served as the longtime chair of the Chinese Progressive Association and is also a founding member of the Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association. She has also served on the Massachusetts

Advisory Council on Bilingual Education and the English Language Learners Task Force for the Boston Public Schools. She worked in the Boston Public School system for over three decades. She ran twice unsuccessfully for the District 2 seat – which includes Chinatown, Bay Village, Fort Point, South Boston and parts of downtown and the South End on the Boston City Council.



### **Yusufi Vali, Executive Director of Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center**

- Arriving at Princeton as a freshman, Yusufi Vali '05 wanted to be an investment banker. But a week into his first semester, terrorists launched the Sept. 11 attacks, and Vali, a Muslim who was not observant, felt that he needed to understand Islam better. He decided to read the Quran, and to do that he began studying Arabic. After graduation, he was a Fulbright scholar in Syria, where he studied interfaith dialogue. Then he went to the University of London on a Marshall Scholarship to earn a master's degree in Islamic studies. A decade later, Vali is executive director of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, the largest mosque in New England. The center serves 1,400 congregants representing 64 nationalities. Vali embraces a vision of American mosques not just as places of prayer, but as engines of community engagement. The center has an active youth program, a food pantry, and a program to welcome converts. Vali learned community organizing on the streets of Minneapolis when he worked on President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign.

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### **Giles Li, Executive Director of Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center -**

Giles Li is a homegrown Bostonian and proud of it. The son of immigrants, Li's family frequented Chinatown and Li found his first job in the neighborhood. Today, he continues to work in the area by taking over for Elaine Ng as executive director of Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center this month. Ng stepped down to take care of her son. Li first came to BCNC in 2006, right after the agency consolidated from six sites to two at 38 Ash Street and the Josiah Quincy Elementary School. He grew the new arts and enrichment program into a well-known one, and became director of programs in 2011, managing eight different programs serving childcare, after school, youth and adults.



### **Ronnie Millar, Executive Director of Irish International Immigrant Center -**

Millar is the Executive Director of the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC), Boston. IIIC assists immigrants from Ireland and from around the world as they integrate into American society. Along with partner organizations they aim to promote reconciliation in Ireland. IIIC provides legal, wellness and education services, advocate for systemic change, and facilitate cross-cultural community building. An immigrant from County Antrim, Northern Ireland, Ronnie has also served as Center Director at the Corrymeela Center for Peace-Building and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland. He came to community work after a 16-year career in the technology sector.



### **Kaska Yawo, Co-Founder & Executive Director of the African Community Education Program -**

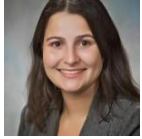
Kaska Yawo, Liberian citizen by birth, United States citizen by choice. Kaska's swearing-in ceremony that day followed his college graduation in Liberia years earlier, years of civil war, years of long, difficult transition from refugee to United States citizen. Kaska's faith in God sustained him during these years and is still the foundation of his life today. A proud concerned father of Melvin, Kaska enrolled him in the Jesuit's Nativity School of Worcester. Kaska, a well-respected leader in the Worcester community, teaches by example: active in his Baptist church, active helping African immigrant youngsters by establishing an after-school volunteer tutorial organization, active in giving back to the country that welcomed him.



### **Anh Vu Sawyer, Executive Director of The Southeast Asian Coalition -**

Anh has been with the Southeast Asian Coalition for almost a year now. And in that time she has developed new programs such as the wellness and sewing program and expanding the existing programs such as the ESL and Referral services. Besides focusing on programs, she has encouraged the development of arts and culture within the community.

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**Juliana Langille, Executive Director of The Family Center at Community Connections of Brockton** - Juliana Badaro Langille emigrated from Brazil in 2001.

She speaks fluent Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Italian. Presently, Ms. Langille serves on the Steering Committee of the Greater Brockton Community Health Network Area, the Board of Directors of the MIRA Coalition, Lutheran Social Services of New England, Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board, the Good Samaritan Community Benefits Committee, and the Department of Children and Families Area Board. Ms. Langille has a background in community organizing and is one of the founders of Student Immigrant Movement (SIM), a statewide immigrant youth-led organization based in Massachusetts that identifies, recruits and develops leaders in local cities and towns. Ms. Langille also has an extensive background in assisting the families of victims of homicide, survivors of domestic violence, and in the substance abuse recovery and prevention field.



**Soben Pin, Co-founder-Manager of KhmerPost USA** - Soben Pin was born in Vietnam's TraVinh Province during the years of turmoil that followed the fall of South Vietnam. With her own family disrupted by the consequences of the war, Soben along with her father, one sister, one brother came to the United States in 2000. After several years in California, the family moved to Philadelphia where

Soben excelled in high school receiving a scholarship to and then graduating from Penn State. While in college, she embraced Khmer culture and became deeply involved in cultural and charitable causes in Philadelphia's large Cambodian community. It was there that she met and married Roger Pin. Together, they launched the KhmerPost USA of which Soben is the owner and business manager.



**Carol J. Kenner, President, Friends of Kayany, Inc.**

Carol J. Kenner is the president and a co-founder of Friends of Kayany, Inc., a US public charity that supports education for Syrian refugee children living in refugee camps in Lebanon. She believes education is the key to preventing more than 500,000 Syrian refugee children from becoming a "lost generation". She served as a judge for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Massachusetts for 18 years; for four of those years, she served as the Court's chief judge. She also served as a judge and chief judge of the First Circuit's Bankruptcy Appellate Panel. Judge Kenner was an adjunct professor at Suffolk University Law School for 5 years. After retiring from the bench, she served as a special assistant attorney general, as counsel to National Consumer Law Center and as a board member and executive committee member of Cape Abilities, a nonprofit serving developmentally disabled adults. She was a founding member of the Women's Bar Association and received its Lelia J. Robinson Award in 2015.



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### **Veronica Serrato, Esq., Executive Director, Project Citizenship**

Veronica is the executive director at Project Citizenship, a non-profit organization working to naturalize legal permanent residents in the Boston area. Prior to joining Project Citizenship, Veronica was the Senior Staff Attorney at the Volunteers Lawyers Project and was responsible for training and mentoring pro-bono attorneys in civil litigation, family law and guardianship law, from 2005 to 2014. She also served for over 5 years at the Wilmer Hale Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School as a Specialist Consultant on domestic violence cases. She also handled domestic violence issues at the Casa Myrna Vazquez and served as the Assistant District Attorney for the Middlesex and Framingham Districts. Her other work and volunteer activities are extensive. Veronica is the recipient of the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly Top Women in Law Award, the Boston University School of Law Public Interest Attorney Award and the Boston University School of Law Victor G. Garo Public Service Award.